

Frequently Asked Questions to the Staff of the Georgia Medical Board Regarding the Physician's Assistants Licensure Process

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It is **RECOMMENDED** that you **DO NOT ACCEPT** an offer of employment until you have a physician who is willing to sponsor you.

- 1. How do I obtain an application for physician's assistant licensure?** The quickest and easiest way to obtain an application for physician's assistant licensure is by downloading the forms from our website at www.medicalboard.state.ga.us under **Information for Health Care Professionals, Download Application, click on Physician's Assistant, and then click on PA Application Forms**. A request for an application for physician's assistant may also be requested in writing by submitting the following information: your legal name and mailing address, or by contacting the Board directly at (404) 656-3913 or 3914 and requesting an application by phone.
- 2. I work as a Physician's Assistant for the State of Georgia (Or, I work for a Georgia county government). My employer informed me that I do not have to pay either the application or renewal fee. Is this true? YES,** employees working at state institutions or state hospitals or any other state run program are fee exempt. Physician's Assistant employees of county operated health clinics or hospitals or any other county operated health care program are also fee exempt. However, state and county employees must meet all other eligibility requirements for licensure and must receive a Physician's Assistant license. If you switch jobs and move into the private sector you will be required to pay fees like all other private sector applicants.
- 3. Is there a fee required if I switch jobs, change or add a supervising physician? What forms do I need to change, add or delete a supervising physician? YES,** there is a \$50.00 fee for this service. If you switch jobs, you will need to complete our on-line form. Click on: **Changing My Supervisor Form** to obtain the instructions and forms. We have them in an online package all as one document. The packet contains a set of instructions, the application form itself, the basic job description(s), and "Notification of Resignation Form." Please complete all the forms in their entirety. Please include the fee by either check or money order made payable to the **Composite State Board of Medical Examiners**. Please do not send cash.
- 4. How long does it take to get my Physician's Assistant License?** Once your application is completed, your file will be reviewed within 5-10 business days and an initial licensure determination will be made. You will be notified in writing of the initial determination and the next scheduled Medical Board meeting date.
- 5. If my application is not received as "completed" by the 15-business day deadline to go to the next Board meeting, what should I do?** In most cases, the only thing to do is to follow-up with your primary source verifiers to find out if missing documentation has been sent to the Board. An application is considered complete when all the application pages, primary source documentation, and administrative screenings have been conducted. A final quality assurance audit of your application is the final process before your application is considered complete. You will be notified in writing when your application is complete and if you are eligible to apply for a temporary permit. Staff cannot submit an incomplete application to the Board for approval.
- 6. What is a temporary permit? How much does it cost?** Pursuant to Rule 360-5-.03(e), a temporary permit may be issued at the discretion of the Medical Board to any applicant who has otherwise met the requirements for Board licensure and who has either applied to take the next available examination or has already taken the examination and is awaiting the results thereof. There is no charge for a temporary permit issued under these circumstances. Such a permit shall have the force and effect of a permanent license. The permit shall expire upon the issuance of a permanent license by the Board or upon notification of the applicant's failure to achieve a satisfactory examination score. Even though you have filed an application with the Board, a temporary permit will not be issued until all administrative screening processes have been completed. It must be determined that further review by the Board is not needed. Applicants must request a temporary permit in writing. The Physician's Assistant job duties, while working with a temporary permit, are limited to those duties contained in the Board approved "Basic Job Description." Temporary permit holders may not perform duties beyond the scope of this basic job description. (Please refer to the Basic Job Description Form in your application packet or download the form from our web site.) Georgia does not issue locum tenens licenses or other limited temporary licenses.

7. **I have a temporary permit, but I did not pass my required examination. What must I do?** Applicants who hold a temporary permit but do not pass the required examination (NCCAA or NCCPA Examination) must stop practicing immediately upon notification that you did not receive a passing score. You must immediately surrender your temporary permit to the Georgia Medical Board. Board rules provide that you may be issued only one (1) temporary permit. Therefore, you may not practice until you provide the Medical Board with proof of a passing score on your required examination. You must reapply for a permanent Physician's Assistant license **AFTER** you have been notified you have received a passing score.
8. **Is my Basic Job Description a part of my permanent record with my supervising physician?** **YES.** The supervising and alternative supervising physician shall at all times maintain on file, readily available for inspection, documentation from the Board evidencing current approval for utilization of the Physician's Assistant and a copy of the applicable approved job description.
9. **I plan to switch jobs. Am I required to seek prior approval from the Medical Board? Is it true my Physician's Assistant license is only valid for the job I am seeking or currently hold?** **YES,** any licensed physician's assistant is required to make an application in writing to Medical Board **PRIOR TO** switching jobs or changing supervising physician. **YES,** it is true that your Physician's Assistant license is only valid for your current job. When a physician applies to supervise a Physician's Assistant that has been previously certified by the Board, the Board may issue a written notice of temporary approval; provided, however, that the Physician's Assistant's duties shall be limited to those contained in the Basic Job Description. As indicated above, there is a \$50.00 fee when you submit an application because you have switched jobs, changed or added a supervisory physician. **If you switch jobs and fail to notify us of this change, you would be practicing as a physician's assistant without a license, which may subject you to a potential fine and/or disciplinary action by the Medical Board.** Therefore, it is imperative that you notify the Medical Board prior to any job change or any change or additions to your supervising physician(s).
10. **I have a job offer and need a Physician's Assistant license immediately. What should I do?** The best thing for an applicant to do under these circumstances is to check with your primary source verifiers, (e.g., school transcripts, references, post-graduate training program, test scores, and out-of-state licensure verification), to make sure they send your information directly to the Medical Board in a timely fashion. When you become eligible for a temporary permit, you must submit a request in writing. We must stress to you that it is highly recommended that **YOU DO NOT ACCEPT** an offer of employment in Georgia **UNTIL** you have met all the necessary requirements for licensure and have been **notified** in writing of your approval for a Physician's Assistant license.
11. **May I apply for a temporary Physician's Assistant permit if I will be coming to Georgia just for a couple of weeks, or just a month?** Georgia **does not** issue locum tenens licenses or other limited, temporary license for physicians or physician's assistants. A temporary permit may only be issued after an applicant has met all requirements established by the state of Georgia for permanent licensure. You must apply for a permanent Georgia Physician's Assistant license if you wish to practice in Georgia.
12. **May I apply for a Medicaid or Medicare provider number with a temporary Georgia Physician's Assistant License?** **NO.** It is the Medical Board's understanding that both the Medicaid and Medicare programs **DO NOT ACCEPT** temporary licenses for billing purposes. You must have your permanent Georgia Physician's Assistant License **BEFORE** you apply for your provider number.
13. **I am scheduled to complete my training program in June of next year, when should I apply for my Georgia Physician's Assistant License?** Applications for a Physician's Assistant License remain active for **one year only**. Therefore, you should not apply for a Physician's Assistant license with the Georgia Medical Board until you have satisfactorily all of your required training.
14. **I received my education outside of the United States. May I apply for a Physician's Assistant license if I went to an international school?** **NO.** Georgia law requires satisfactory completion of a Physician's Assistant training program that has been approved by the Board. The Board has not approved a Physician's Assistant training program outside of the United States. A current list of Board approved Physician's Assistant training programs will be made available to an applicant upon request. You may also access the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) website at www.aapa.org
15. **I hold a Doctor of Medicine degree. I received my medical education outside of the United States. May I apply for a Physician's Assistant license if I went to an international medical school and while I am waiting to be licensed as a Medical Doctor?** **NO.** Georgia law makes no provision to allow licensure for Physicians to practice as Physician's Assistants regardless of their training in or outside the United States.

16. **I received my medical education in the United States. I am a Medical Doctor (or Doctor of Osteopathy) by training. May I work as or apply for a Physician's Assistant license while I am waiting to be licensed as a Medical Doctor?** There is no provision in the law to allow for a physician, regardless of his or her medical training, to work as a Physician's Assistant while waiting licensure as a physician. Georgia law specifically requires Physician's Assistants to have completed course work in their program area.
17. **Does an application for a Georgia Medical License have an expiration date? YES.** Applications for a Georgia Physician's Assistant License remain active for **one-year only**. If you applied for a Georgia Physician's Assistant License and were not issued a permanent license within 12 months, you must reapply by submitting a new application, with your most current information, in addition to an application fee. Upon receipt and review of your application, we will notify you of any documentation previously provided which is acceptable. All other information, such as letters of reference and a current resume **MUST BE** resubmitted. We will not simply "reactivate" your old application.
18. **I have decided not to move to Georgia and I want to withdraw my application. What should I do? Is my application fee refundable?** If you decide during the application process that you would like to withdraw your application, it is necessary for you to put this request in writing and sign and date the request and give a brief explanation as to why you would like to withdraw your application. Fees paid to the Georgia Medical Board are **non-refundable** whether or not a license is issued, an application is withdrawn or the application is denied.
19. **What does "primary source verification" mean?** The Medical Board verifies all applicant information as "primary source" verification. This means that we must receive the information **DIRECTLY** from the issuing source. (e.g., School transcripts must come directly from your school. We will not accept a non-certified copy).
20. **Does Georgia make a distinction between a Physician's Anesthesia Assistant and a Physician's Assistant for primary care when issuing a Physician's Assistant License? YES,** the Georgia Medical Board has different requirements for a Physician's Assistant for Primary Care and a Physician's Anesthesia Assistant. The major differences are in training, the type of professional examination taken as well as a very different job description and responsibilities. Please read the *Physician's Assistant Act* for detailed information as well as the rules of the **Composite State Board of Medical Examiners** for Physician's Assistants.
21. **May a Board licensee practice in Georgia using a Physician's Assistant license from another state? NO.** The only exception that allows out-of-state licensed Physician's Assistants to practice in Georgia is when the U.S. military employs the individual, or other federal installation such as a veterans' hospital, or an Indian reservation. Physician's Assistants who work for the federal government, as such, may not practice outside the employing federal facility without first obtaining a Georgia Physician's Assistant license.
22. **Are Physician's Assistants in Georgia required to obtain Continuing Medical Education (CME's) every year? How do you know they are fulfilling their obligation?** Physician's Assistants are required to complete twenty hours per year of Continuing Medical Education Units (or, 40 hours over the two year validation period of the license). At the time of renewal, proof of CME completion **IS NOT** required upfront. Continuing Medical Education is checked by random audits of the pool of renewing physician's assistant and must be provided to a representative of the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners upon demand. Failure to provide proof of CME completion may lead to possible action by the Medical Board.
23. **May I report a change of address by e-mail or change it online myself?** You may report a change of address to us by e-mail at **MEDBD@dch.state.ga.us**. Please be sure to include your full name, title and license number. As a precaution, please give us your old address and then the new address you would like us to use. Please remember that the address you report to us will be the address listed on our web page for the public to view.
24. **How do I find out about career opportunities in rural Georgia?** For information concerning practice opportunities in rural Georgia, please contact the **Office of Rural Health Services** at (229) 401-3090 or visit the **Department of Community Health, Office of Rural Health Services** web page at: <http://www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/>.
25. **How do I find out about minority health concerns in Georgia?** For information concerning minority health issues in Georgia, please contact the **Office of Minority Health** at (404) 657-6707 or visit the **Department of Community Health, Office of Minority Health** web page at: <http://www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/>.